
Since the reform of the Mass in 1969 good liturgical celebration has been an important priority in the pastoral life of the Church. Crucial in this regard is a knowledge of the rite itself and its potential for a creative and fruitful celebration that is faithful to church guidelines, receptive to the recommendations of liturgists and sensitive to the needs of God’s people at worship.

The Word and Eucharist Handbook is a valuable aid towards such a goal. Written “to aid ministers and planners in acquiring a basic understanding of the structure and meaning of the Order of Mass,” it provides a wealth of information and recommendations that will surely enhance the celebration of Sunday and weekday Eucharist.

The book is divided according to the outline of the Mass, with the Liturgy of the Eucharist rightly meriting three chapters (Preparation Rites, Eucharistic Prayer, Communion Rite). Each chapter considers the various elements within that part of Mass. The pertinent text from an official document (usually the General Instruction of the Roman Missal) introduces the section. Then follows a commentary to explain the history, meaning and proper liturgical practice for that element.

This rich material is presented in a layout which makes it easily readable and handy for quick consultation. The author’s style is smooth and concise — no minor achievement, considering the wealth of sources, articles and liturgical experience on which the commentary is based. The selected bibliography, list of periodicals and useful addresses provided at the end add to the practical value of this work.

Anyone working in the field of pastoral liturgy will find this a useful guide to effective celebration. Priests, first of all, can learn much for the improvement of their role as presiders. Lay liturgical ministers will find answers to a variety of questions touching their ministry and at the same time deepen their knowledge of its historical and theological basis. In truth, anyone who loves the Mass will be enriched by reading and consulting this book.

James T. Meehan, S.J.


This book is written in a fascinating style. From beginning to end, in Fr. Miranda’s masterful use of English both technical and literary, a perceptive reader senses a passionate concern. From the introduction, modest and